

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COUNCIL OF FALLS CHURCH

September 21, 2015

Dear Falls Church City Council:

The Environmental Services Council (ESC) urges the City to once again devote staff resources to address climate change and energy efficiency issues and to reestablish the City's Climate Task Force with the goal of significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions from City government operations and the broader City community.

Climate change is a serious global phenomenon that has important implications for local communities, including Falls Church. The City's vision of environmental harmony has strong, active citizen support. For example, resident and business participation enabled us to become a Green Power Community in 2013, and nearly 300 CFC households signed up for the 2015 City-endorsed Solarize energy program. The Village Preservation and Improvement Society issued an environmental goals report in April 2015 calling for Falls Church to make important strides in its per capita greenhouse gas emissions. These include a 20% reduction in GHG emissions by 2020 (from a 2008 baseline) and a 75% reduction by 2050. The ESC endorses these goals but cautions that they will be very difficult to attain without adequate staff resources and the reestablishment of the Task Force.

City staff, working with a renewed Task Force, can be the focal point for coordinating a City-wide approach to climate change, energy efficiency, and environmental sustainability issues. They can ensure that we take full advantage of regional, state and federal funding and collaborative initiatives for environmental protection and improvement, and improve the integration of environmental policy into our operations and procedures. As the impacts of climate change progress, we need to be better prepared to seize new opportunities and address new challenges as they arise.

Reallocating staff resources to this area would respond to growing citizen interest in climate change issues and energy sustainability and ensure that the City remains a local leader in this area and fulfills its vision of environmental harmony.

Thank you for considering this request and we welcome further discussion with you on this topic.

Sincerely yours,

Ray Arnaudo
Chair, Environmental Services Council

Cc: Wyatt Shields, City Manager
Mike Collins, Director, Department of Public Works
Chris McGough, ESC Staff Liaison